

October 7, 2002
Marlene H. Dortch
Commission Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW, CY-B402,
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Proceeding 02-306

Dear Commissioners:

The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, CEO-led, public-policy organization representing employers dedicated to promoting economic prosperity and quality of life in the Bay Area. The Bay Area Council has a long-standing policy of supporting competitive markets and fostering regulatory frameworks that encourage competition in the interest of consumers, ratepayers and taxpayers. Recently, it has come to our attention that you are reviewing the SBC Pacific Bell long distance application which was filed more than four years ago.

In these tough economic times, it is essential that regulations encourage employers to generate more jobs. It is essential that competition be encouraged in the telecommunications industry that will result in more job creation and a healthier marketplace. And, now it is only the Federal Communications Commission that can ensure that California's long distance market is open and competitive.

The California Public Utilities Commission has held an unprecedented series of filings, workshops, audits, re-filings, tests and hearings - all designed to determine and ensure that SBC Pacific Bell has complied with the 1996 Telecommunications Act requirement to open the local market to competitors. The marketplace is clearly open as companies across the state are offering consumers a wide variety of services - including local telephone service.

An open and competitive long distance market in California will offer savings, responsive customer service and the convenience and value of one-stop shopping for all telecommunications services. Further, the competitive nature of the telecommunications industry will tend to drive the current long distance rates lower - exactly what has happened in other states.

Finally, the Bay Area Council has long-term knowledge of SBC Pacific Bell as a good, solid corporate citizen making positive contributions to the state and to local economic efforts. It is unfortunate that the long distance entry process for SBC Pacific Bell has taken so long when other states have opened the door to long distance competition. Fairness as well as the merits of competition warrant immediate FCC action.

I urge you to approve the SBC Pacific Bell long distance application and let Californians reap the benefits that consumers in 23 states are already enjoying.

Sincerely,

Sunne Wright McPeak
President & CEO